

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the careful consideration of this application. Claims 1-20 and 22-25 are currently pending. Claims 1-20 and 22-24 have been amended. Claim 21 has been cancelled, without prejudice, and new claim 25 has been added. The specification has been amended. Based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant appreciates the Office Action's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 6, 7, and 21. Claim 6 has been rewritten in independent form. Claim 7 depends from claim 6. Claim 21 has been cancelled and re-presented in independent form as new claim 25. Accordingly, the Applicant submits that claims 6, 7, and 25 are in condition for allowance.

Objections to the Drawings

The Office Action objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) for allegedly failing to show the "several degrees of freedom" and the "linear movement of parts." The claims have been amended to remove recitation of the "several degrees of freedom" and the "linear movement of parts." Accordingly, the Applicant requests that this objection be withdrawn.

Objections to the Specification

The Office Action objected to the specification for failing to recite the entire chain of priority. The specification has been amended to recite the entire chain of priority. Accordingly, the Applicant requests that this objection be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

(1) The Office Action rejected claims 14-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, for failing to enable the “several degrees of freedom” of claim 14. Claims 14-24 have been amended to remove the recitation of “several degrees of freedom.” Accordingly, the Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

(2) The Office Action rejected claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, for containing various informalities. Claims 1-20 and 22-24 have been amended throughout to place them in compliance with U.S. claim drafting practice, and to overcome the indefiniteness rejection. Claim 22 has been cancelled, and replaced with new claim 25. Accordingly, the Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

(1) The Office Action rejected claims 1, 2, and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,479,786 to Fields, Jr. et al. (“Fields”) in view of the alleged admitted prior art (“APA”). The Applicant traverses this rejection. Nevertheless, to facilitate further prosecution, claim 1 has been amended. The Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable

over Fields and the APA for at least the following reasons.

No reasonable combination of Fields and the APA discloses or renders obvious “fence elements interconnecting the reservoir and the device that alters the level of the receptacles, to enclose a work chamber,” as recited by amended claim 1. The Office Action apparently aligns the skids 140 or skids 190 of Fields’s FIG. 5 with the claimed “reservoir,” and apparently aligns the robot 520 with the claimed “device that alters the level of the receptacles.” Further, the Office Action asserts that Fields discloses that “all parts of the system for a cell [] are joined together with fences,” referring to the safety fences 150 and 545 of Fields’s FIG. 5.

However, the safety fences 150 and 545 do not interconnect the skids 140 or skids 190 of Fields’s FIG. 5 with the robot 520 to enclose a work chamber, as claimed. Instead, the safety fences 150 and 545 are completely disconnected from those and any other components of the system, as shown in FIG. 5. Furthermore, there are numerous gaps between the skids 140, skids 190, robot 520, and other components of the system. Thus, the skids 140, skids 190, and robot 520 are not interconnected, and fail to enclose a work chamber. The APA fails to provide the missing disclosure of Fields. Accordingly, no reasonable combination of Fields and the APA discloses or renders obvious “fence elements interconnecting the reservoir and the device that alters the level of the receptacles, to enclose a work chamber,” as recited by amended claim 1.

Claims 2 and 8 depend from claim 1, and are patentable for at least the same reasons.

(2) The Office Action rejected claims 1, 2, 8, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the APA in view of Fields. As demonstrated above, no reasonable combination of Fields and the APA discloses or renders obvious “fence elements interconnecting the reservoir

and the device that alters the level of the receptacles, to enclose a work chamber,” as recited by amended claim 1. Claims 2, 8, and 9 depend from claim 1, and are patentable for at least the same reasons.

(3) The Office Action rejected claims 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over APA and Fields, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,827,691 to Hanada et al. (“Hanada”). Claims 10-12 depend from claim 1, which as demonstrated above, is patentable over any reasonable combination of APA and Fields. Hanada does not remedy the deficiencies of APA and Fields. Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims 10-12 are patentable over any reasonable combination of APA, Fields, and Hanada.

(4) The Office Action rejected claims 3-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over APA and Fields, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,585,470 to Van Der Meulen (“Van Der Meulen”). Claims 3-5 depend from claim 1, which as demonstrated above, is patentable over any reasonable combination of APA and Fields. Van Der Meulen does not remedy the deficiencies of APA and Fields. Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims 3-5 are patentable over any reasonable combination of APA, Fields, and Van Der Meulen.

(5) The Office Action rejected claims 14-20 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over APA and Fields, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,789,295 to Boucher, Jr. et al. (“Boucher”). Claims 14-20 and 22 depend from claim 1, which as demonstrated above, is patentable over any reasonable combination of APA and Fields. Boucher does not remedy the deficiencies of APA and Fields. Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims 14-20 are patentable over any reasonable combination of APA, Fields, and Boucher.

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(6) The Office Action rejected claims 23 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over APA, Fields, and Boucher, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,478,137 to Hebels et al. (“Hebels”). Claims 23 and 24 depend from claim 1, which as demonstrated above, is patentable over any reasonable combination of APA, Fields, and Boucher. Hebels does not remedy the deficiencies of APA, Fields, and Boucher. Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims 23 and 24 are patentable over any reasonable combination of APA, Fields, Boucher, and Hebels.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

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Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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